



— STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA —  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**  
KRISTI L. NOEM | GOVERNOR

July 14, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Through:

Nancy Dragani, Regional Administrator  
FEMA Region VIII  
Denver Federal Center  
PO Box 25267  
Denver, CO 80225-0267

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. § 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I request you declare a major disaster as a result of a severe storm, straight-line winds, tornado, flooding, and hail event that occurred June 11-14, 2022 for the South Dakota counties of Butte, Haakon, Jackson, Jones, McPherson, and Spink.

During the incident period, a storm system developed as a large upper-level storm system moved from the eastern Pacific Ocean across the northwestern United States. The strong jet stream associated with the system carried several continuous disturbances over the northern Plains and produced the extreme winds. Southerly winds on the surface transported high humidity (dewpoints in the mid-60s to lower 70s) to the area, which fueled the storms. As the upper-level storm system moved from the Rocky Mountains toward the northern Plains, it triggered extreme thunderstorms.

Over the four-day period, much of the western and central South Dakota plains experienced severe thunderstorms with hail two to four inches in diameter (golf ball to grapefruit size) and wind gusts of 80 to 95 mph on Saturday, June 11, Sunday, June 12, and Monday, June 13. Extreme winds in excess of 120 mph (equivalent to a category 3 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale) occurred Tuesday, June 14 over north central South Dakota (Table 1).

Highest Wind Gusts	Location	Date	Highest Wind Gusts	Location	Date
120 mph	4 NNE of Roscoe	6/14	80 mph	7 E Sturgis	6/11
120 mph	7 WSW of Frederick	6/14	79 mph	3 SW Leola	6/14
92 mph	12 WSW Castle Rock	6/11	78 mph	3 SSW Whitlocks Bay Rec Area	6/14
91 mph	1 N Saint Onge	6/12	77 mph	1 N Buffalo	6/12
90 mph	Kadoka	6/14	77 mph	1 NNE Faith	6/13
84 mph	8 N Redig	6/13	75 mph	Lane	6/13
83 mph	7 E Wanblee	6/14	75 mph	3 W Holabird	6/14

Table 1: Recorded wind gusts over 75 mph (source: NWS Rapid City and Aberdeen)

On Saturday, June 11, storms formed in southeastern Montana and tracked around the northern edge of the Black Hills, then southeastward across west central South Dakota and intensified in the Philip, South Dakota area, where wind gusts were estimated at 80 to 90 mph. Philip received significant wind damage, with roofs blown off several buildings.

The storms on Sunday, June 12 developed over northeastern Wyoming, slamming the Belle Fourche, South Dakota area with wind-driven hail, and crossed Meade County before striking the Philip area again. The storms continued into south central South Dakota where an EF2 tornado, with estimated 120 mph winds, was confirmed northwest of Murdo, South Dakota. Several other farms had straight line wind damage consistent with wind speeds over 100 mph. Later in the night a second line of training thunderstorms formed over parts of Haakon, Jones and Stanley counties, resulting in areas of flooding.

On Monday, June 13, storms entered South Dakota from eastern Wyoming toward the southern Black Hills and turned northeast over the plains. Large hail fell over Hot Springs while Kadoka had wind gusts of 90 mph. Heavy rain fell over the plains east of the Black Hills, with 1.00 to 2.50 inches measured in some places, which filled stock dams and ponded in low-lying areas.

Early Tuesday morning, June 14, storms continued over south central South Dakota and quickly became wind producers. As the storms intensified and tracked northeast the winds became increasingly extreme. Peak winds would occur between 4 and 5 am as the storms tracked across parts of north central South Dakota. Personal weather stations near Roscoe and Frederick recorded winds at 120 mph. Numerous trees and powerlines were

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downed, widespread reports of roof, outbuilding, and grain bin damage were noted, and 16 steel electrical transmission towers were downed approximately 7 miles WSW of Frederick. These steel electrical transmission tower collapses are consistent with wind speeds in the 130-140 mph range.

This time period was exceptionally active across South Dakota. The National Weather Service offices issued 63 more combined severe and tornado warnings during the June 11-14 period than the average number of warnings for this time of year. This is 2.1 standard deviations above normal. Nationwide, South Dakota exceeded normal warning rates more than any other state in the continental U.S. Additionally, the tornado in Jones County was the first tornado to be officially recorded in that county since 1999.

South Dakota has been battered by storm after storm that continues to further erode our critical lifesaving and life-sustaining public infrastructure. We appreciate your declaration for South Dakota (FEMA-DR-4656) on June 29, 2022 for the severe storm, straight-line winds, tornadoes, and flooding on May 12, 2022. Twenty of South Dakota's 66 counties, plus two of the nine Indian reservations, were included in that disaster declaration. The damage caused many issues with public and private infrastructure throughout the state as well as an extreme emotional toll on impacted citizens.

South Dakota communities have been in a constant state of response since our initial state of emergency leading to FEMA-DR-4656 was declared on May 13, 2022. In addition to the storms outlined above, South Dakota also experienced widespread severe weather damage over Memorial Day weekend; fortunately, state and local responders were able to manage that recovery on our own. These frequent and continuous storm damages, most recently occurring on July 5, 2022, have significantly taxed our local and state government's financial resources and are impacting our ability to recover independently. The storm system on July 5, 2022 was deemed a derecho by the Storm Prediction Center and National Weather Service. The highest winds in the Sioux Falls forecast area were 99 mph near Howard and 96 mph near Huron. Widespread 60 to 80 mph winds were reported throughout South Dakota.

All six counties in this request are rural and have a low population base, which limits the local government's ability to financially recover from disasters. Approximately 22 percent of the population in these counties is over age 65. Without assistance, costs incurred by the rural electric cooperatives because of these damages will be passed on to families who are already suffering from their losses, many of whom are lower income. Rural South Dakotans are used to being self-reliant, but the compounding effects of storm after storm have become an extreme hardship for families and communities trying to recover.

All negative impacts from the previous disaster declaration request regarding public infrastructure such as our energy lifeline, agriculture, and tourism continue to plague our



citizens and communities today and have been further exacerbated by the additional precipitation and storm damage we continue to receive statewide.

Once again, South Dakota's energy lifeline was significantly impacted by the string of storms during this incident period. Between the rural electric cooperatives and private energy companies, more than 6,000 customers experienced power outages. Many customers were without power for as long as four days. Due to the length of the power outage and high temperatures, several families lost their freezers full of food. Many of these families reside in rural, impoverished counties, which further exacerbates disaster impacts and makes recovery an insurmountable task. Mutual aid and contractor support was coordinated by the South Dakota Rural Electric Association to bring in additional power crews to help restore the power as quickly as possible. Communication lifelines were also affected from the power outages and some residents were without telephone and internet communication during the power outage.

Additionally, 11 of South Dakota's 66 counties (Bennett, Buffalo, Charles Mix, Corson, Dewey, Jackson, Lyman, Mellette, Oglala Lakota, Todd, and Ziebach counties) are defined as "persistent poverty," meaning at least 20 percent of the county population over the past thirty years had poverty-level household incomes. Individuals living in persistent poverty face daily struggles with food security, access to health care, and lack of basic shelter. Jackson County, with a population of 2,878 people, is included in this declaration request.

We know our rural communities will continue to feel the impacts of this disaster in the future. Agriculture is an economic driver in South Dakota. Agriculture contributes \$32.5 billion annually to South Dakota's economy. As is true of producers across the country, our agriculture community is humble and resilient. History has shown they do not report losses and quietly deal with the effects of storms. Losses are often far more significant than we hear about. More importantly, these effects have an emotional toll on the agricultural community. When agriculture suffers in South Dakota, the entire state suffers. The economy faces a noticeable impact when farmers and ranchers are unable to make contributions to stimulate the local markets by purchasing new farm machinery, dining out at local restaurants, or conduct other shopping due to agricultural losses. South Dakota State University's Extension Service gathered a comprehensive list of recovery resources to offer to producers in the state, such as information on tetanus, wind damage to agricultural buildings, salvaging feed grain, and livestock loss. Local US Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency offices are also disseminating information about the Emergency Conservation Program and Livestock Indemnity Program to area producers. While these efforts are currently ongoing, we will need federal resources to sustain these efforts in the long-term.

In response to the May 12, 2022 derecho storm, and in accordance with federal law, I have taken appropriate action under state law and directed the execution of the State Emergency Operations Plan on May 13, 2022 and declared a State of Emergency to exist.

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South Dakota has been under a state of emergency ever since due to the multiple storms that continue to ravage the state. Affected counties also have issued disaster declarations for their jurisdiction for this event.

On July 7, 2022, I requested from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) a joint federal, state, and local preliminary damage assessment of the impacted areas for public assistance damage. The preliminary damage assessment of public infrastructure for all 6 counties was conducted July 11 through July 13, 2022. The assessment confirmed 6 counties suffered severe impacts to public infrastructure. The details of the Public Assistance preliminary damage assessment are attached in Enclosure B.

Total public assistance damages for the 6 counties are estimated to be at \$1,630,852 for a statewide per capita impact of \$1.84. The statewide per capita impact of \$1.84 is above the most recent statewide per capita impact indicator of \$1.63, effective October 1, 2021. Counties incurred damages ranging from \$4.12 per capita in Spink County to a devastating \$526.88 per capita in Haakon County.

The State received a Presidential disaster declaration on June 29 and is in the very early stages of the recovery process with FEMA officials. The State has six additional open Presidential disaster declarations and is still working through the recovery process from these disasters with FEMA. As you understand, recovery from disasters takes years after the initial event to fully recover physically, emotionally, and financially. The costs associated with this disaster combined with the seven other open declarations increases the State's financial stress and further stretches our capabilities if federal assistance is not provided.

Significant local government personnel and equipment have been dedicated to recovering from the severe storm, straight-line winds, tornado, flooding, and hail event. I have further determined this event is of such severity and magnitude that effective recovery is beyond the financial capabilities of the state and the affected local governments, and supplemental federal assistance is necessary. I do not anticipate the need for direct federal assistance at this time.

I respectfully request you declare a major disaster for the State of South Dakota as a result of this severe storm, straight-line winds, tornado, flooding, and hail event. I am specifically requesting Public Assistance for the following counties: Butte, Haakon, Jackson, Jones, McPherson, and Spink.

On July 14, 2022, I issued an Executive Proclamation declaring a disaster in South Dakota. Preliminary estimates of the types and amount of assistance needed under the Stafford Act are detailed in Enclosure B. I certify for this major disaster, state and local governments and private-non-profit organizations will assume the applicable non-federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act.

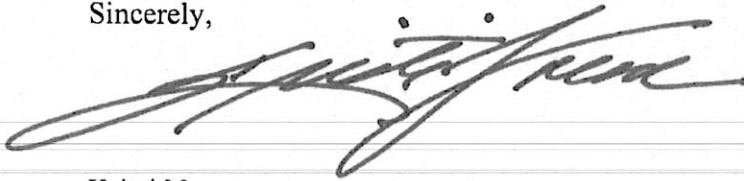
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I am also requesting the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program statewide. South Dakota is a huge proponent of mitigation and has experienced great success in this area. This is evidenced by our approved enhanced State Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan which prioritizes mitigation projects. The enhanced Statewide Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved on April 18, 2019. At the end of 2016, a severe winter storm (FEMA-DR-4298) impacted the state and resulted in a loss of approximately 200 power poles for one rural electric cooperative. Without prior mitigation projects that allowed for power line burials, the cooperative is confident they would have lost more than 2,000 power poles during that storm. This disaster presents us with another opportunity to mitigate future damages. The State is committed to mitigation projects which lessen the impacts of future disasters.

I have designated Ms. Tina Titze as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. She will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide further information or justification on my behalf.

I sincerely appreciate your consideration of my request and your willingness to assist South Dakota's citizens. South Dakotans pride themselves on being a hardy group of citizens and we pull together to help one another, especially in times of disaster. While local officials and first responders have been personally impacted, they still have been available to assist their citizens in this time of need. The impact of this event will be felt in these communities well into the future. However, with the availability of federal assistance, combined with the state, local, and voluntary assistance provided, it will help individuals, businesses, and government inch closer to recovering from this disaster.

Sincerely,



Kristi Noem  
Governor

cc: Senator Mike Rounds  
Senator John Thune  
Representative Dusty Johnson

Enclosures:

OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13  
Enclosure B: Public Assistance  
Enclosure C: Estimated Assistance from Other Federal Agency Programs